3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 O117 Murngin O117

Whereas the upper panels deal with the sea and seashore, the lower two deal with the land. In the central panel is the woman, *Njinpili-lingou*, a bark dish on her head, standing on the top of a sand-dune near Cape Shield. The rectangles on either side of her are nearby sand-dunes. In panel *a* the five cockatoos in flight were disturbed by *Njinpili-lingou*. There are also five emus in the same panel. Their tracks are shown on panel *c*.

The Man, Wanatjai

Plate 95B is the painting of an aboriginal, *Wanatjai*, with a long Malay smoking pipe in each hand.[92] On the upper edge of the painting are four steel axes, and on the left-hand side two steel knives. *Wanatjai* is wearing a belt. On his chest is a design of triangles[93] which he brought back from Macassar with him.

The Woman, Malwulwi

In the early times a pregnant ancestral woman, *Malwulwi*, accompanied by a little rat, *nik-nik* (the woman's dog), went into a mangrove swamp at Gumumungu, on the north side of Blue Mud Bay, to collect oysters. While filling her carrying-bag with the oysters, she was swept off her feet by a strong tide. She tried to swim to land, but was drowned because the tide was too strong and she too heavily pregnant. The little rat, *nik-nik*,[94] however, was able to swim to safety.

Malwulwi's body is now a large tree in the mangrove swamps at Gumumungu. On the trunk of this tree there are marks indicating three maximum water levels: spring tides, usual tides and tides when, during the wet season, the fresh-water from the rivers floods the mangrove swamps.[95]

Plate 95D depicts *Malwulwi* in the mangrove swamp at Gumumungu, near Blue Mud Bay, where she used to collect oysters. The cross-hatched panels *a*, *a*, indicate the fresh-water from the river running among the mangrove trees and meeting the tide coming up from the bay. As mentioned in the myth, when the tide ebbs it leaves dark lines on the trunks of the trees.

Muruma, the Fisherman

In early times *Muruma*, a noted fisherman, lived with his wife beside a stream called Bamui, near the totemic place of Jalboa, north-east of Yirrkalla.

One day *Muruma*, having speared many fish, put them on the fire to cook. He was resting under a tree when one of the *Bukalatji* (enemies of *Muruma*) paid him a visit, saying that he and his wife were hungry, having just paddled all the way from Dambalia (Bremer Island). Little suspecting treachery, *Muruma* gave his cooked fish to the *Bukalatji*, who, after having eaten them, rose to go.

92. Interpretation, F. M. Setzler.
93. This is the same as the *jiritja* cloud symbol of Cape Arnhem (Fig. 631). It is also present in the art of the Celebes, Fig. 638.
94. See bark painting of the rat, *nik-nik*, and *Bourngauwili's* dog, *dulaiuja*, Pl. 121A.
95. These marks are indicated on the carved wooden figure of *Malwulwi*, Pl. 133C, D.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
O117 Murngin O117

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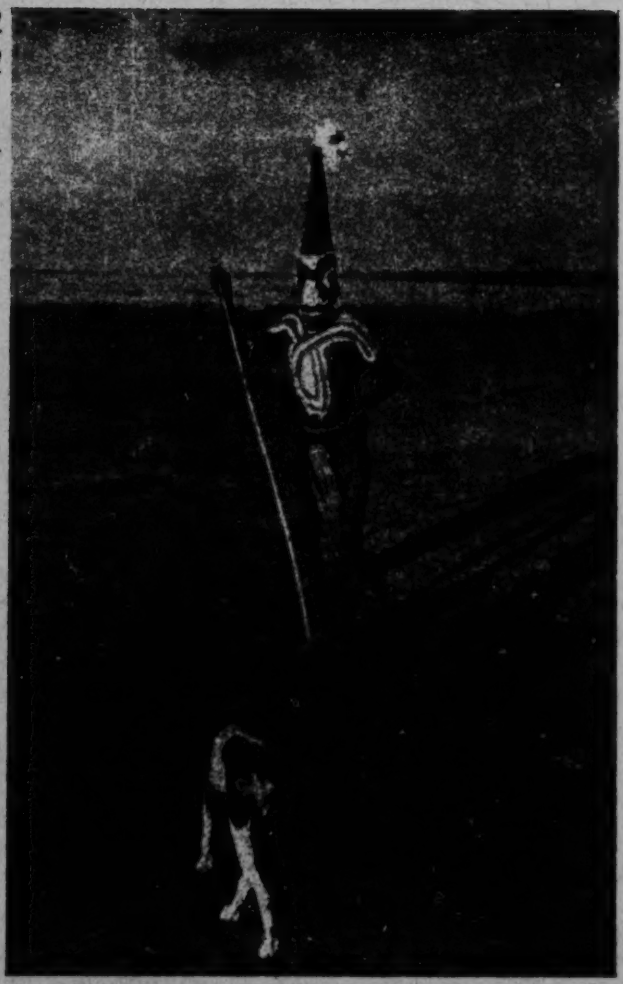

PLATE XV

[p. 84(F)]

[For caption see category 116, p. xiii]

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943) 1949
OI17 Murngin OI17

2.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

OWNERSHIP OF LAND, ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND THE ORGANISATION OF WORK

000 To an economist who has studied Malinowski's account of economic structure and organisation in the Trobriand Islands, and whose ideas of primitive economics are based on this information, the fact must be stressed that there is a vast gap, culturally, between the relatively advanced Papuo-Melanesian people of the community studied by Malinowski and the Australian aborigines.

105 231 The natives of Arnhem Land are a nomadic people who live by hunting and collecting. They have no settled village life, no gardens or agriculture, they know nothing of pottery, and they have no domestic animals other than the half-wild dingo, which serves as boon companion and hunting ally. Although the evidence suggests that the dingo accompanied the aborigines on their journey to Australia, he has never become truly domesticated but has remained a "hanger-on" and has preserved an aloof independence through the centuries.

105 The people have a simple but specialised material culture, and show much skill in technology. Their houses are well-constructed and of several distinct types, each well-adapted to a special environment or seasonal condition, or related to material available. They possess no looms but are expert

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

Preface

ARNHEM LAND! Here fish climb trees, the sun sets in green fire and women hoard human skulls. It is the home of Stone Age man who shaves his head, and dismembers and bakes a body before eating it to absorb warrior-strength. The witch-doctor is supreme and treats fevers by massaging, pummelling and sucking gravel, blood, and animal bones from dumbfounded patients. Beside the backwaters of the untamed north, Stone Age nomads continue their ageless life and timeless practices.

Little is known of the Australian aboriginal except that in the Stone Age he broke away or was driven out from the rest of the human race and wandered to Australia. He possessed a continent at the cost of becoming isolated from the rest of the human race. Other nomadic hunters evolved into pastoralists or agriculturists but the aboriginal was denied normal development, for neither Stone Age nomad nor modern scientist has succeeded in adapting indigenous food-plants to everyday needs, and no Australian animal has been domesticated—as Dr Gilruth once succinctly remarked: 'You can't ride a wallaby or milk a wombat.'

Aboriginal development was not stimulated by the white man and his nineteenth-century civilization. As early as 1860, the explorer McDouall Stuart built his cairn, marked his tree, and recorded: 'I am now camped in the centre of Australia; I have marked a tree and planted the British flag there. We gave three cheers for the flag, the emblem of civilization, religion, and liberty, and may it be a sign to the natives that the dawn of liberty, civilization, and Christianity is about to break on them.' But every pioneer was not a Stuart, and as Dr Madigan says: 'What did break on the

[p vi is blank]

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

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LANDFALL

Two Yulengor families in their dug-out canoes

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ARNHEM LAND BEACH

Imported cattle near Yirrkala station

[facing p6]

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

ground and cultivating and planting crops. Payment in the form of flour and tobacco was made for all work done, and the principle of 'no work—no pay' was strictly adhered to. Agriculture was an economic necessity in assisting them to develop from a nomadic existence to a communal life. Pay was later in the form of food grown on the station; in this way they became self-supporting, and profits were automatically returned to them.

When the time came for planting it seemed ridiculous to the nomad to bury good sweet-potatoes instead of eating them, for the relationship between seed and harvest had not occurred to them. About three months later, when the first crops were still immature I was surprised one morning to find that they had been scratched out and eaten. Two months of hard clearing and three months of cultivating had gone overnight. Disappointing as it was, the people could hardly be blamed, for it was against all their experience to leave good food to mature. For centuries, stray coconuts had drifted from the East Indies to the shores of Arnhem Land, but none took root, for this unexpected harvest from the sea was eagerly seized and eaten. Nomads consume all edible food at hand, and in bush life rarely wait for yams, fruit, and berries to ripen. Food is scarce, and they instinctively make the most of anything they find. I have seen them bring loads of popular cashew nuts into camp, stripping the trees and smashing their wide shady branches in an effort to get the last of the crop, and then gorge the nuts through day and night till all have been eaten. On rare occasions a number of turtle are caught, and though some could be kept alive and eaten later, they are killed at once, and the camp feasts and sleeps intermittently till the catch is finished.

We tried to explain that cows and goats were kept for their milk and not for meat, but nomads found it hard to sit and tend them day by day and yard them at night, when each

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

beast represented a potential feast. Tailing stock, and protecting them from dingoes whilst they grazed, was a foreign idea to Stone Age hunters, and if they were not watched, they would build each day a rough brushwood yard in the bush to prevent the stock wandering off for grass and water. Meanwhile the herdsman slept in the shade, and at sundown he brought the animals back to the station yards.

With two hundred nomads on the station, a simple system of sanitation was soon necessary. In the bush they never bother about this, for they live in small hordes, and camp in one place only long enough to eat the meagre food supply, and then move elsewhere. I have never seen Yulengor deliberately wash themselves, but they are so often in the water after fish or crossing creeks and swamps, that they do sometimes get wet. Their cleansing agents are sand and ashes in which they sleep and lounge, and these are fairly effective in removing body moisture and dirt. The predominating acrid odour in their hair, dillybags, and shelters comes mostly from the blinding smoke in which they cook, eat, and sleep.

Unfortunately most nomads take too readily to wearing left-off clothes. We did all we could to control the craze, and issued free soap and a yard of brightly coloured cloth to the men, and short skirts to the women. Our chief objection to the use of clothing is that it is passed from one to another, never washed, and when wet is allowed to dry on the body, thereby causing colds and pneumonia. Bush Yulengor wear nothing unless it be an occasional piece of bark or bunch of leaves attached to a waist-string. But when traders and adventurers introduced coloured cloth, blankets, and left-off clothing, they were eagerly acquired as ornaments, passed from one to another, worn till they fell to pieces, and except for accidental immersion, were never washed. Strange clothes have been seen, as when a man was seen in camp dressed in lady's floral Japanese pyjamas

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

Variety in this otherwise uninteresting vegetable diet is provided by fish, birds, reptiles, and small animals. Women fossick in jungles for land-snails and large white wood-grubs, and when the tide is out they comb the mud flats and reefs for mangrove worms, shellfish, oysters, lobsters, and crabs.

Some women train dingoes to help in their ceaseless search for small animals, reptiles, birds, and eggs. A dingo pup, captured in the bush, henceforth shares the family shelter, travels in the canoe, and is fed and petted with the children. They are often called 'son' by the owner and referred to by the relationship term used for the owner or his child. When a favoured dog dies, it is buried and wept over in much the same way as a child. Women gash their heads and wail, one of the men conducts a mourning-song and dance, and I have seen them switch themselves with leafy twigs to drive off the canine ghost!

Dingoes breed freely with domesticated dogs, and most of the wild dogs in Arnhem Land now bear unmistakable traces of the white man's dog. However, the pure-bred dingo is by no means extinct, and there are many of these large, strong, good-looking brown dogs in Arnhem Land. When they are well fed (they seldom are), they grow to almost twice the size of a kelpie and are attractive in appearance, but they cannot bark. It seems certain that the dingo migrated with the first aborigines, and Dr F. Wood-Jones, an authority on the dingo, says: 'The dingo and the Stone Age dog of Europe are practically identical and both but little removed from the Palearctic wolf stock from which they sprang. Man and dog were both migrants.'

Several Yulengor legends referred to the creation of dingoes by aboriginal Ancestors. In one story, it was said that having already formed the nuclei of several hordes, the Ancestors came to the grassy plains south of Arnhem Bay, where they made a magpie, an opossum, and two dingoes. Summer showers drove the birds into a tree, where they

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

SUN AND MORNING STAR

Yulengor. He is a welcome messenger of light. A rope is attached to Bunumbirr's waist, and he unwinds it as he comes out of Buralkor so that when the sun-child has been fed and his mother is about to leave he can conveniently haul on the rope and draw the star back to keep him company. Bunumbirr always meets the sun on her way out, and he disappears from the sky as she is about to break over the horizon. 773* 821

In Creation days the Junkgowa made a man and two women and sent them out to commence a horde-family in the sky. They are still grouped there by the side of Canthus.

During the wet season the stars converge, and it is said then that the husband has made a big shelter for himself and his wives. Such an arrangement is due primarily to the machinations of the elder sister, who regularly gives birth to a child at the end of the year and coerces the young wife to care for her and hunt for the family's food, but when the rains are finished she sends her off again to camp by herself: 'You make your camp over there, because I want this shelter for my husband and child.'

This horde-family of the heavens lives as naturally as do Yulengor. By day the women forage for swamp rush-corms, water-lilies, and cycad nuts, and at night sing and dance by the fire. Occasionally when the starlight seems to change into a red glow it is said that the husband is playing on his drone pipe and that the women are dancing. On still nights the women can be heard calling their cats: 'Jai . . . r, Jai . . . r, Ch, Ch, Ch!' on much the same cooeeing notes that Yulengo [831] women now use when calling their dogs. Unfortunately the family in the sky has no dogs, though no reason is given for this absence of the otherwise ubiquitous dingo.

'Jurrpan' is the Evening Star, and a long time ago he was an ordinary nomad living with his family on the eastern